

ARTS IMPACT LESSON PLAN

Theater and Writing Infused Lesson

Lesson One: *Narrative Tableaux*

Author: Rachel Atkins Grade Level: Eighth

Enduring Understanding

Actors and writers can develop a narrative through a sequence of events from beginning to middle to end.

Lesson Description (Use for family communication and displaying student art)

In this theater and writing lesson, students explore characters and events to create a narrative. They brainstorm who is involved and show those characters in statues. They collaborate with small groups to create tableaux (frozen stage pictures) to develop a story based on a study of immigration or another unit of study and portray their narrative sequence from beginning to middle to end. Students write their own version of the narrative, adding details to explain the characters and events.

Learning Targets and Assessment Criteria

Target: Portrays a character involved in a 3-part narrative (beginning, middle and end) through statues in tableaux.

Criteria: Uses face and body (statue) to show a character in connection to others within a sequence of events.

Target: Collaborates with others (in tableaux).

Criteria: Communicates ideas to others; makes compromises; and incorporates input/feedback.

Target: Writes a narrative using specific details and event sequences.

Criteria: Introduces characters, setting and situation, and describes a series of events through beginning, middle, and end.

Vocabulary

Arts Infused:

Action
Audience
Beginning
Character
Collaboration
Compromise
Conclusion
Emotion
End
Event
Middle
Problem
Relationship
Sequence
Setting
Solution

Writing:

Description
Details
Narrative

continued

Materials

Museum Artworks or Performance

Seattle, WA

Book-It Repertory Theatre
Seattle Children's Theatre

Tacoma, WA

Broadway Center for the Performing Arts

Materials

Tableau Checklist; Narrative prompt
content materials (Reading, Social
Studies, etc.); Arts Impact
sketchbook/writing journal; Self-
Assessment Worksheets and pencils;
Class Assessment Worksheet

Learning Standards

WA Arts State Grade Level Expectations

*For the full description of each WA State Arts
Grade Level Expectation, see:*

<http://www.k12.wa.us/Arts/Standards>

- 1.1.1 Concepts: character, plot
- 1.2.1 Skills and Techniques: movement/stance,
gesture, facial expression
- 1.4.1 Audience Skills
- 2.1.1 Creative Process
- 2.2.1 Performance Process
- 2.3.1 Responding Process
- 3.1.1 Communicates through the Arts
- 4.2.1 Connects Theater and Writing

Common Core State Standards in ELA

*For a full description of CCSS Standards by grade
level, see:*

<http://www.k12.wa.us/CoreStandards/ELAstandards/>

W.8.3.A: Engage and orient the reader by
establishing a context and point of view and
introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize
an event sequence that unfolds naturally and
logically.

continued

Arts:

Body Shape
Cheating Out
Depth
Downstage
Eye Contact
Facial Expression
Levels
Physical Contact
Statue
Tableau
Upstage

W.8.3.A: Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences and events.

W.8.3.E: Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on the narrated experiences or events.

W.8.9: Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

College and Career Readiness Standards in Speaking and Listening

1. Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

Social Studies GLEs (if using SS focus)

<http://www.k12.wa.us/SocialStudies/pubdocs/SocialStudiesStandards.pdf>

1.3.1 Analyzes how the United States has interacted with other countries in the past or present.

3.2.2 Understands cultural diffusion in the United States from the past or in the present.

3.2.3 Understands and analyzes migration as a catalyst on the growth of the United States in the past or present.

4.1.2 Understands how the following themes and developments help to define eras in U.S. history: Development and struggles in the West, industrialization, immigration, and urbanization (1870—1900).

4.2 Understands and analyzes causal factors that have shaped major events in history.

4.4.1 Analyzes how a historical event in United States history helps us to understand a current issue.

5.4 Creates a product that uses social studies content to support a thesis and presents the product in an appropriate manner to a meaningful audience.

ICON KEY:

 = Indicates note or reminder for teacher

 = Embedded assessment points in the lesson

Pre-Teach

Select narrative prompt materials, such as:

- Historical research within a specific grade-level Social Studies unit
- Fiction or nonfiction reading
- Presentation of other prompts (photos, illustrations, objects, film, etc.)

Lesson Steps Outline

1. Introduce/review Social Studies content area narrative prompt. Guide students to brainstorm characters and events. Ask students to write lists and share ideas. Write list on board.

2. Introduce concept of actor neutral. Guide students to create statues of characters, feelings, or actions by calling them out from the brainstorm list. Repeat for a variety of ideas.

 Criteria-based process assessment: Uses face and body to show characters.

3. Introduce tableau. Put students into groups of 3-5 in their own space, in a large circle around the perimeter of the room. Display or write the Tableau Checklist from the lesson on the board.

 Criteria-based process assessment: Uses face and body (statue) to show a character in connection to others within a sequence of events. Communicates ideas to others; makes compromises; and incorporates input/feedback.

4. Facilitate groups creating narratives and tableaux independently.

 Criteria-based process assessment: Uses face and body (statue) to show a character in connection to others within a sequence of events. Communicates ideas to others; makes compromises; and incorporates input/feedback.

5. Facilitate as groups perform their tableaux for the class. Ask audience to explain what they see by giving evidence.

 Criteria-based teacher checklist and peer assessment: Uses face and body (statue) to show a character in connection to others within a sequence of events.

6. Guide students to complete their Self-Assessment Worksheets independently.

Criteria-based teacher checklist and self-assessment: s face and body (statue) to show a character in connection to others within a sequence of events. Communicates ideas to others; makes compromises; and incorporates input/feedback.

7. Instruct students to write their own version of the narrative they developed with their group, focusing on the sequence of events and adding descriptive details. Instruct students to create a quick sketch of their tableaux.

Criteria-based teacher checklist: Introduces characters, setting, and situation, and describes a series of events through beginning, middle, and end.

LESSON STEPS

1. Introduce/review content area narrative prompt. Guide students to brainstorm characters and events. Ask students to write lists and share ideas. Write list on board.

▣ This lesson uses immigration as a sample topic, but any of the following starting point options could be used:

- *Research-Based:* Students synthesize information based on one event or point of focus within a Social Studies unit to create characters and circumstances that match learning.
 - *Story-Based:* Students read a grade-level appropriate text and adapt it into a play.
 - *Creative:* Students create their own story for their play, based on a given prompt.
- *We'll use theater to develop narrative stories. You'll work in small groups to create these narratives on your feet, as actors, and then you'll each write your own versions of the story you create together. We'll build the narratives over a series of lessons, so you'll have time to develop your ideas both through theater and writing.*

▣ If using immigration as topic:

- *We've been learning about immigration to the United States. Who were some of the groups of people who immigrated to the US in the late 19th century?*
- *Why did they come here?*
- *What did they do/what happened to them when they arrived?*
- *What were some of the problems they faced in their home countries and in the US?*
- *Write your ideas, and then we'll share them.*

2. Introduce concept of neutral. Guide students to create statues of characters, feelings, or actions by calling them out from the brainstorm list. Repeat for a variety of ideas.

- *Now we'll use our faces and bodies to show some of these ideas. Stand up and push in your chairs so you have some room.*
- *Stand the way I am: feet underneath you, arms at your sides, face and shoulders relaxed, not leaning against anyone or anything. You should be in control of your own body—it's one of your tools as an actor. This position is called actor neutral.*
- *I'll call out an idea on our list, and then give you a 1-2-3-Freeze. Create a statue of what you think that character, feeling, or action looks like. Use the countdown to get into position so that, when I say, "freeze," you're in the statue you want to be in. Use your whole face and body. Hold your statue until I call out "actor neutral."*
- *Statue of a miner. 1-2-3-Freeze! Actor neutral.*
- *Statue of an immigrant who is sad about leaving home. 1-2-3-Freeze! Actor neutral.*
- *Statue of an immigrant arriving in New York Harbor—you decide how they feel. 1-2-3-Freeze! Actor neutral.*

Criteria-based process assessment: Uses face and body to show characters.

3. Introduce tableau. Put students into groups of 3-5 in their own space, in a large circle around the perimeter of the room. Display or write the Tableau Checklist from the lesson on the board.

- *You've been making statues on your own. When you put two or more statues together to create a frozen stage picture, that's called a tableau. Actors work together, using their bodies and faces to show an event or something happening.*
- *A tableau uses a checklist of four basic elements. Let's all do one together as a model, and I'll review the checklist as we go. Every group will create a picture of a group of immigrants on the deck of a ship first arriving in the US.*
- *First, each actor creates an exaggerated statue. Use your whole face and body to show who you are, what you're doing, and how you're feeling. Make a choice about how your character feels at this moment: scared, excited, confused? I'll give you a count to get into position. 1-2-3-Freeze.*
- *Second, actors in a tableau should be at different levels (low, medium or high) and depths (front or back of the stage). Adjust your tableau so no two actors are at the same level, and so you're staggered, not in a straight line. 1-2-3-Freeze.*
- *Third, tableaux show connections between characters by making choices about how near or far you are to each other, and through physical contact (touching or almost touching— positive or negative space), or eye contact. Find a way to adjust your tableau again to include these connections. Maybe you're a family travelling together. 1-2-3-Freeze.*
- *Finally, actors in a tableau need to cheat out so they can be seen. Angle your body between the audience and the other actors on stage so more of your front can be seen. Make sure you're not being blocked or blocking anyone else. Levels and depth can help with this; if you're at the front, you should be in low space. In the back, you should be in high space. Check your positions and adjust your tableau so everyone can be seen. 1-2-3-Freeze.*

Criteria-based process assessment: Uses face and body (statue) to show a character in connection to others within a sequence of events. Communicates ideas to others; makes compromises; and incorporates input/feedback.

4. Facilitate groups creating narratives and tableaux independently.

- *Your group will collaborate to create a narrative about the experience of immigration. You'll show it in three tableaux, so think about it in a sequence of 3 parts: beginning, middle, and end.*
 1. *The beginning introduces the characters in their home country and their reason(s) for leaving.*
 2. *The middle focuses on some aspect of their journey (in their home country, en route, or in the US on the way to their final destination).*
 3. *The end focuses on something that happens to them in the United States—a result of their immigration.*
- *Use the research and other materials we've been studying to develop your story. Your goal is to create a narrative that helps the audience understand more about why these people left their home country, what the experience of getting here was like, and what happened to them when they got here.*
- *Be aware of the ways you collaborate with your group. Collaboration means:*
 1. *You communicate your own ideas, but you also listen to other people.*
 2. *You compromise with one another to come up with your narrative.*
 3. *You incorporate each other's input and feedback as you develop both the narrative and your tableaux.*
- *I'll be asking you to reflect on how you collaborated at the end of the lesson.*
- *Everyone in the group should take notes about the narrative. Write a brief description of what's happening in each part of the sequence. These notes will help you in your writing later, and as we keep building on these tableaux.*
- *Once you've created your narrative, make your three tableaux. Everyone in your group should be in all three tableaux. You may use one chair if you need it, but no other props or set pieces. Work together to show who's involved and what's happening at each point in your narrative. Use the Tableau Checklist.*
- *Rehearse your tableaux the way you'll show them to the class, with the audience in the center of the class/circle. Practice moving smoothly from one tableau to the next, without having to talk in between.*

Criteria-based process assessment: Uses face and body (statue) to show a character in connection to others within a sequence of events. Communicates ideas to others; makes compromises; and incorporates input/feedback.

5. Facilitate as groups perform their tableaux for the class. Ask audience to explain what they see by giving evidence.

- *Let's do a final rehearsal, an all-play. Everyone will make their tableaux at the same time. I'll prompt you the same way I will when you show to the class.*
- *Beginning Tableau into position, 1-2-3-Freeze. Middle Tableau, getting into position, 1-2-3-Freeze. End Tableau, getting into position, 1-2-3-Freeze. Actors relax.*
- *Now we'll go around the circle and each group will show their tableau series one at a time. I'll prompt you the same way. If everyone stays where they are in the circle, you should have a reasonably good view of the other groups.*
- *Audience, notice what the actors are doing. What characters do you see? What's happening in the narrative?*
- *After each group shows, I'll take one or two pieces of feedback. Give evidence about how you know what you see. Use the Tableau Checklist. For example, "I could tell these characters were being chased because their bodies were in running positions downstage, and the other character was upstage with her arms reaching toward them like she was trying to catch them."*

Criteria-based teacher checklist and peer assessment: Uses face and body (statue) to show a character in connection to others within a sequence of events.

6. Guide students to complete their Self-Assessment Worksheets independently.

- *When you fill out your worksheets, you will assess your own work on the tableaux. Then you can analyze and assess your collaboration. After you have written your version of your narrative in our next lesson step, you can assess your work on that as well.*

Criteria-based teacher checklist and self-assessment: Uses face and body (statue) to show a character in connection to others within a sequence of events. Communicates ideas to others; makes compromises; and incorporates input/feedback.

POST THEATER LESSON WRITING

7. Instruct students to write their own version of the narrative they developed with their group, focusing on the sequence of events and adding descriptive details. Instruct students to create a quick sketch of their tableaux.

- *Use your notes to help you write your own version of your group's narrative.*
- *Explain the sequence of events from beginning to middle to end: their reason(s) for leaving, their journey, and what happened when they got here. Add your own details to describe the characters, settings, and events. Your details don't need to match what other members of your group write.*
- *Because we'll be returning to these narratives and tableaux in our next lessons, you should also make a quick sketch of your group's 3 tableaux in your journal, to help you remember what you did when we need to recreate them.*

Criteria-based teacher checklist; Introduces characters, setting, and situation, and describes a series of events through beginning, middle, and end.

Elements of Tableau Checklist

- Statue: Individual facial expression and body shape/gesture
 - Use whole face and body
 - Show character
 - Show action (body)
 - Show emotion (face)
- Levels and depth
 - Low/medium/high, left/right/center, downstage, upstage, near/far
 - Three dimensional use of stage or playing space
- Character and spatial relationships/connections
 - Eye contact
 - Physical contact using positive or negative space (touching or not touching)
 - Proximity or distance
- Open to the audience (cheat out)
 - Audience awareness

ARTS IMPACT LESSON PLAN Theater and Writing Infusion

Eighth Grade Lesson One: *Narrative Tableaux*

Teachers may choose to use or adapt the following self-assessment tool.

STUDENT SELF-ASSESSMENT WORKSHEET

Disciplines	THEATER	THEATER 21st Century Skills			THEATER/WRITING			Total 8
Concept	Statue/Tableau	Collaboration			Narrative Writing			
Criteria	Uses face and body (statue) to show a character in connection to others within a sequence of events.	Communicates ideas to others; makes compromises; and incorporates input/feedback.			Introduces characters, setting, and situation, and describes a series of events through beginning, middle, and end.			
Student Name	Statue Relationship	Shares Ideas	Compromises	Uses Input	Characters	Setting	Events B, M, E	

COLLABORATION SELF-ASSESSMENT WORKSHEET

Put a check next to each of the ways you collaborated with your group to create your tableau:

_____ I communicated my ideas to the other members of my group.

An example of an idea I contributed to our tableau is:

_____ I compromised with the other members of my group.

I changed an idea I had to go along with the group by

_____ I incorporated feedback or input from other members of my group.

I used someone else’s idea or suggestion to adjust something I did by

ARTS IMPACT LESSON PLAN Theater and Writing Infusion

Eighth Grade Lesson One: *Narrative Tableaux*

CLASS ASSESSMENT WORKSHEET

Disciplines	THEATER		THEATER 21 st Century Skills			THEATER/WRITING			Total 8
Concept	Statue/Tableau		Collaboration			Narrative Writing			
Criteria	Uses face and body (statue) to show a character in connection to others within a sequence of events.		Communicates ideas to others; makes compromises; and incorporates input/feedback.			Introduces characters, setting, and situation, and describes a series of events through beginning, middle, and end.			
Student Name	Statue	Relationship	Shares Ideas	Compromises	Uses Input	Characters	Setting	Events B, M, E	
1.									
2.									
3.									
4.									
5.									
6.									
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24.									
25.									
26.									
27.									
28.									
29.									
30.									
Total									
Percentage									

What was effective in the lesson? Why?

What do I want to consider for the next time I teach this lesson?

What were the strongest connections between theater and writing?

Teacher: _____

Date: _____

THEATER AND WRITING LESSON: *Narrative Tableaux*

Dear Family:

Today your child participated in an **Arts and Writing** lesson. We talked about how to develop a narrative through a series of events.

- We explored characters and events from our study of immigration (or other unit of study).
- We collaborated with a group to develop frozen stage pictures called tableaux to express our ideas.
- We created a series of three tableaux with our group to show the beginning, middle and end of a narrative.
- We wrote our own versions of our narrative, adding our own details to explain the characters and the sequence of events from beginning to middle to end.

At home, you could practice telling or re-telling real or imagined stories with a beginning, middle, and end. Describe something that happened during your day, on the news, in your community, in your past.

Enduring Understanding

Actors and writers can develop a narrative through a sequence of events from beginning to middle to end.